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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR 7 MARCH 2007

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for March 7, 2007.

Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL

EKSPRES / SABAH (GUNEV) / BOLGE / EVRENSEL / ZAMAN / RADIKAL: Kahramanmaraş Governor İlhan Atış, who has been assigned to the governor's position in Adana through a decree that reshuffled governors, said, 'if my new position in Adana is being seen as a promotion, that I should have earned through working with the courage that Kahramanmaraş people instituted me with. My happiness is only because I am not going to a far away place.' Adana Governor Cahit Kirac has been assigned as the new Izmir Governor. Former Izmir Governor has been assigned as the National Security Director.

GUNDEM: Sezgin Tanrikulu, Chairperson of Diyarbakır Bar Association, said that authorities must open the doors of the İmralı Prison, where Abdullah Öcalan is being kept, to an independent commission of doctors. DTP welcomed the decision of the government to send three doctors to İmralı to take samples from Öcalan, but regarded Justice Minister's remarks that allegations about the poisoning of Öcalan would be soon refuted as unfortunate since those remarks were exerting pressure on the three-doctor delegation. 300 people, including members of several civil society associations, unions and DTP members gathered in Tunceli to hold a press announcement upon remarks made by Justice Minister about the health condition of Abdullah Öcalan (see press summary for March 6). Thousands of women are reportedly continuing their March 8 Women's Day activities in Sırnak and the women are reportedly pointing out the health condition of Öcalan. The daily reports some people as hurling Molotov cocktails at non-passenger train cars in Mersin and İstanbul and causing small fires and material damage, to protest the alleged poisoning of Öcalan.

ZAMAN / GUNDEM: The dailies report that hair and skin samples taken from Öcalan were sent to İstanbul Forensic Authority for further examination.

RADIKAL / ZAMAN / GUNDEM: A Diyarbakır court sentenced Ahmet Türk, National Chairperson of DTP, to six months in prison for using a courtesy title before the name of Öcalan during a speech he delivered at a meeting with mayors from DTP on January 18, 2006.

GUNDEM: Subgovernor's Office in Sanliurfa's Halfeti district

overturned the application of the local newroz committee requesting authorization to conduct local celebrations on grounds that the application document included a non-Turkish alphabetical character, which is 'w'. DTP distict chairperson of Halfeti said that they changed the text of the document and reapplied to hold celebrations in the district.

GUNDEM: DTP Siirt provincial party organization will send an invitation to PM Erdogan for the Newroz celebrations in Siirt. The Newroz committee will reportedly soon apply to governor's office to get permission for celebratory activities.

CRIME / LAW ENFORCEMENT

GUNDEM: Four of the six people, who were detained on March 4 for allegedly holding a protest over news about Abdullah Ocalan's health in Diyarbakir's Ergani district, were arrested after being arraigned on charges that they violated the Law on Holding Demonstrations and Gatherings. Meanwhile, two persons, deputy district chairperson of DTP and members of DTP's youth branches in Hakkari's Yuksekova district, were detained on unspecified grounds.

SABAH (GUNEV) / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Hakkari police unveiled a drug network in Hakkari and seized 28 kilograms of heroin which the dealers intended to market in the European countries.

SABAH (GUNEV): Sirnak police seized 19,746 liters of smuggled fuel oil in the last one month in Sirnak's Cizre district. Along with fuel oil, police also seized large amounts of smuggled cigarettes, tea, cigars and tobacco. Five persons have been detained.

SABAH (GUNEV): As a result of the efforts of the

ADANA 00000031 002 OF 002

Kahramanmaraş police, three alcohol and historical artifact smugglers were caught in operations conducted simultaneously at separate districts.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / ZAMAN: Seyhan Municipality police in Adana cracked down on counterfeiters and seized 1 tons of detergents that copied brand-names and are ready to be offered for sale.

ECONOMY

SABAH (GUNEV): Hatay's Antakya and Iskenderun districts will also extend support to Mersin's "2nd Animal Breeding Fair," and, "Food, Food Technologies and Packaging Fair."

SABAH (GUNEV): TOBB (Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchange) is going to build an international transit customs gate at the border area with Syria in Mardin's Nusaybin district. The gate will be an alternative to the Habur Border Gate in Sirnak. 2500 vehicles will be processed at the gate on a daily basis. TOBB will invest 20-25 million dollars to de-mine the area where the border gate will be constructed.

CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Cukurova University rector said that a helicopter landing platform will be built south of university's Balcali Hospital in Adana. The platform will be useful in making the hospital more effective during a possible disaster in the area.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): ANAP (Motherland Party) Adana provincial chairperson Necati Erdem pointed out that the overall crime rate in Turkey soared in 2006 and the streets of big cities have become unsafe places for people. Erdem pointed out that the crime rate should in fact be higher because most of the people are not reporting crimes because of their distrust of the police.

GUNDEM: Istanbul Kurdish Association Institute awarded

Abdullah Demirbas, Mayor of Sur Municipality in Diyarbakir, with a prize for his efforts in developing the Kurdish language. Meanwhile, the daily reports that senior officials of DTP Diyarbakir party organization paid visits to Mayor Demirbas to extend support to him following the Ministry of Interior's file lodged with the Council of State to dismiss Demirbas and municipality assembly members from their positions reportedly on grounds that they undertook efforts to promote a multi-language environment.

ZAMAN: Following Batman province, which has increasing suicide rates, the daily reports that the suicide rate in Diyarbakir's Bismil district has also increased.

GREEN